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Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

A Message from the Department Commander

Jerry Brandt, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



Another month has gone by, and it seems we get busier as we move along. Fall Conference, the District 17 visit, and the Children & Youth Cruise were great times to be back among friends. December will prove to be another busy month, with visits to Districts 5 and 13, Florida Legion College, and of course, the Holidays.

Florida legionnaires seem to be upbeat and enthusiastic about volunteering in their communities and helping fellow veterans. This leads me to believe we are going to have a great year.

A special thanks to District 14 Commander Tom Frank, District 17 Commander Jim Bowers, Southern Area Commander Johnny Castro, Northern Area Commander Troy Horsley, 1st Vice Commander Eunice Butts, and 3rd Vice Commander Chris Hamrick for accompanying me on visits through District 14 and 17. The visits went well, with great turnouts.

As mentioned earlier, we just finished up Fall Conference. We would love to get your feedback. Please visit floridalegion.org/feedback and let us know what you think. Was it interesting? Did you learn anything?

Are there other subjects you feel would be beneficial? We want to hear from you.

In attendance at Fall Conference was the leading candidate for National Commander, Jim Troiola. I asked him what he wanted to achieve as National Commander. He indicated several items that we are already training on suicide prevention, homeless veterans, increasing the number of our service officers, and buddy checks. We've been working on these areas for years, and he was surprised to learn this after sitting through some of our classes: Lena Heredia-Perez's class on Buddy Checks; Jennifer Cooper's class on PROJECT: VetRelief; Alan Cohen's and Larry Robert's classes for Service Officers; and PDC Dudley's Homeless Veterans round table. Comrades, we are way ahead of what other Departments are doing, so congratulations to our trainers and instructors, and a sincere "thank you" to those who received the training.

I mentioned last month that Department has been working on several items, one of those items being the Constitution and By-Laws. We had an interesting meeting on November 7th, and several good points were made on proposed changes. We will review them with the committee at the end of November, and I will update you on the progress in January. We will have a round table discussion with the DEC to keep everyone up-to-date on the status. The next round table is scheduled

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<< Department Commander continued from page 1

for January 25th, and another on May 17th. There will be no voting, just information sharing among all of the members.

Communication is essential throughout our organization. Often what happens in one post will happen in several posts, but how the issues are handled are often by different methods. If we share information, we can find the right way to resolve the issues fairly across the board.

At this time, our visitors from the North should be here, and our membership is going up; please get your renewals in quickly. Some of you have heard that I have a "BET" with the Departments of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana on membership goals. As of November 7th, Louisiana is number 18th, Mississippi is 24th, Georgia is 32nd, and Florida is 41st, although we're leading Alabama who is 45th. Currently, I have to buy oranges for 3 of the 4 Departments.

I ask, why is Florida 41st? Last year by November 5th, we had 68,798 members paid for 2021. This year on November 7th,

we only have 63,786 members paid for 2022. That's a difference of 5,000 members. COVID was an issue last year, but what is our problem this year? We can't afford to lose our membership, so we need to work together to correct this.

Perhaps you have received or given out a "Mentor" pin. The pin indicates that the recipient is a "Florida Family Mentor." How do you get this pin?

1. You must have someone, whom you have mentored, step up to indicate you are their mentor.
2. You and the person who nominated you must be at a district meeting where a zone commander, Detachment commander, Auxiliary Department President, or myself is in attendance.

We will NOT give the pin to the mentor; the person who nominated you will present the pin. This is a way to say "thank you" to those who have helped you become who you are. Again, this is just at district meetings.

I hope to see all of you on my travels. After all, we are brothers and sisters, in War and in Peace.

Thanks-giving, Hope, Charity and LOVE

Eunice Butts, 1st Vice Commander

1stvice@legionmail.org



Congratulations to the posts that have attained their membership goals or risen above. Please continue promoting membership using "the buddy check," DMSs, 400's, posting bulletins,

etc. If you need any help, please contact your district membership or department membership chairmen. They will be happy to assist you.

A special thanks to the District 14 commander and posts for your kindness and hospitality during the visitation of the department commander. Please continue

doing good things for our veterans. Many posts presented outstanding projects for Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day. Let us not forget Pearl Harbor Day and Wreaths Across America this month. December will be a very busy month, giving back to our veterans, children and youth, and communities.

Again, this is the time of year we do our "buddy checks" with our members. It is the beginning of the season of Thanks-giving, hope, charity, and showing LOVE to one another and to those of us who are less fortunate.

I wish each of you and your families a very blessed Christmas and a very prosperous New year.

1-31	Holiday Raffle
1	Membership Goal 75%
1	Civil Air Patrol (USAF Aux) Birthday
1	Area Commander Visit: Post 273
1	Central Area Commander Visit: Post 273
1	Area Commander Visit: Post 99
2	Central Area Visit: Post 99
2	Area Commander Visit: Post 186
2	Central Area Visit: Post 186
3-5	Cub Scout Camporee at MacDill AFB
4	District 1: Meeting
4-7	Commander's Visit: District 5 ★
4	District 16: Meeting
4	Central Area Visit: Post 14
4	Central Area Visit: Post 139
6	St. Nicholas Day
6	Hannukkah / Chanukah Final Day
7	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
7	Flag at Half Staff
7	Central Area Visit: Post 7
8	Membership Renewal Cut-Off
8-12	District 13: Commander's Visit
9-12	Commander Visit: District 13 ★
9	Area Commander Visit: Post 173
11-17	National Legion College ★
11	District 2: Meeting
11	Area Commander Visitation: Post 108
11	Escort to Vetsville Cease Fire House
11	District 8: Meeting
11	Area Commander Visit: Post 14
11	Central Area Visit: Post 14
12	District 5: Meeting
13	U.S. National Guard Birthday
15	JSSP: Target & Registration Closes
15	Homeless Veterans Nominations Due
15	Employment Nominations Due
15	Bill of Rights Day
16-19	Florida Legion College ★
18	Wreaths Across America
18	District 14: Meeting
18	Central Area Visit: Post 339
20	Operation Just Cause (1989)
21	First Day of Winter
24-3	Department HQ Closed
24	Christmas Eve
25	Christmas
26	Kwanzaa
31	Membership Early 100% Award Goal

★ Commander Jerry Brandt's Attendance Tentative.

★ National Event

Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at www.floridalegion.org. We share the information we are provided.





Work Together. Learn Together.

Michael Raymond, 2nd Vice Commander
2ndvice@legionmail.org



Now we're back from Fall Conference, and it's time to put all that fresh information to work. We're quickly approaching the end of our calendar year, and we need

to start thinking outside the box to draw our members into our posts and entice them to renew. Keep in mind that all your Department Officers and myself are at your service. I've already begun visitations in District 7 and 15, as well as my own District 13. If you need me at your event, please don't hesitate to ask.

I want to share my thoughts about the current issues regarding the Constitution

& ByLaws being revised. Would you please allow the committee to complete their work?

We will get our chance to review and give our opinions when the time is right. We all understand that this is a difficult job, or it would have already been completed years ago. Let's give them a chance.

Keep Goals in Mind

Chris Hamrick, 3rd Vice Commander
3rdvice@legionmail.org



The month of October seemed to have been a quick one. Area training concluded on October 2nd, followed by another weekend of "Train the Trainer" at Department.

After training, we had the 5 State Fun Run immediately after. October also included a successful Challenge 22 event in District 1. Meetings in Districts 1, 3, and five were awesome. I even managed to attend a Homeless Veteran event in Cape Canaveral.

I want to give a big shout-out to the Western Area for leading in membership. Keep working on our programs, and keep membership goals in mind. If you need

assistance, don't hesitate to reach out to your chairpersons, leadership, or Department Staff. Communication is the key to success.

I look forward to seeing you on the road. Keep it real!

Certification of Service

Dennis Boland, NEC
nec@legionmail.org



Resolution #5 Officer and Chairman Certification of Service

The National American Legion Organization investigated the Department of Florida this past year. One issue

found was that we had a department officer that wasn't qualified to be an officer. Through the investigation, it was determined that the officer was never in the service.

Resolution #5

RESOLVED: That it is required that before the induction into office, every officer and national chairman of The American Legion provide satisfactory evidence of honorable

military service proving eligibility for membership in The American Legion as follows;

- (A) Eligibility for American Legion membership of post officers will be certified by their post adjutant with notification to their department adjutant
- (B) Eligibility for American Legion membership of department officers will be certified by their respective department adjutant with notification to the national adjutant; and
- (C) Eligibility for American Legion membership of national officers, National Executive Committeeman, Alternate National Executive Committeeman, commission chairman, and committee chairman, after an initial review by the national judge advocate, will be certified by the national adjutant to the National Executive Committee; and be it further

RESOLVED, that any member with aspirations of future national leadership in The American Legion may, at any time, submit one's proof of eligibility for American Legion membership to the office of the national judge advocate; and be it finally

RESOLVED; That Resolution No. 591, Certification of Service Record of American Legion Officers, passed by the Thirteenth National Convention in 1931 is hereby Superseded and rescinded.

The importance of verification will avoid unforeseen problems in the future for Posts and Department.

"HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS"
Limited edition ornament from the Department of Florida

AVAILABLE AT: www.floridalegionstore.org





Checking in...

Philip Crouthamel, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



Greetings to all Historians and wannabes. I want to thank all who attended my class at the Fall Conference. I hope that you, at least, have a basic understanding of how to assemble a

history book.

Just a reminder: There are only TWO (2) judging categories- *One-year History Book*

and *One-year Narrative*. There is no "open book" or "scrapbook". However, By National standards, you may assemble your *One-year History Book* in a regulation scrapbook, but it MUST be titled "*One Year's History Book*".

I will send to anyone that requests, the complete instruction course via email. I am in the process of assembling an email list of all post commanders in the districts to pass along this fantastic course to their historians. If you email me, please put in the subject line 'post historian' so that I don't delete your email.

I am still looking for 2 volunteers to assist me in judging books at Department Convention in June. With any luck, it should take no more than 2-3 hours, depending on how many are submitted. The judging area will be in Convention Department Headquarters.

Any questions, please feel free to call or email me.

In closing, I would like to wish you and yours a very Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Middle of the Pack

Bruce Carl, Central Area Commander
centralarea@legionmail.org



We are well into the holiday season! I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving. Fall Conference was great, and I saw many new faces of first-timers who attended. Those

that I spoke to enjoyed the classes and camaraderie! Great instructors and great training!

The Central Area membership could be better, but we are in the middle of the pack at this point. The 7th District is still in first place, as of writing this article. The 16th District continues to move up, and the 15th District has some work to do. I know they will be working hard to bring the numbers up! I look forward to continuing my Post visitations this month and meeting with the Post Officers and membership. The first half of the month will be keeping me busy, but like most everyone else, the second half of December will be spending time with family and friends as we celebrate the holiday season.

Planning for the Central Area Ball continues to move forward. The Ball is scheduled for March 19th, 2022. There will be a flyer coming out to all the Posts soon. It has been several years since the Area has held a ball, and we are really looking forward to this. We have a great team of volunteers working on putting it together!

I would like to wish everyone a very happy, healthy, and safe holiday season. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukkah, or some other religion, may your holiday be filled with happiness and joy as you celebrate with your friends and family!

Remember Local Veterans

Troy Horsley, Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org



Greetings fellow Legionnaires. If you missed Fall Conference, you missed tons of good training. Department put together a great program. Now might be a good time to see about putting

Department Convention into your schedule. I hope your post had a wonderful Veterans Day. I was able to attend the parade in Palatka, which was sponsored by Post 45 and Post 293. Thank you to the posts in the

17th district. The Department Commander was well received at your posts during his visitation and the comradeship and hospitality were top notch.

Great work on membership this past month. The 3rd district is running well on retention and getting new members with the 17th and 5th coming on their heels. It is just as important to retain current members as it is to sign-up new ones.

Contact your post and remind them that Boys State money and registration are due to Department on January 5, 2022. The Boys State Registration Fee is (\$450.00).

During the holiday season, please remember our local veterans, especially those who live alone. If you can, invite them to the Post for a meal or possibly deliver them a meal on Christmas if they can't make it to the post.

December is also the holiday Blood drive month, I encourage all Posts and individuals to participate. The Department Commander is visiting the Mighty 5th district December 2-4, 2021. Take a few moments on December 7th to remember Pearl Harbor Day. It could be a great opportunity to have an open house and attract new members.

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December 11th is the 17th District's holiday party at post 120. December 12th is the 5th District meeting at Post 129 at 1400. The

Department Commander is visiting the 3rd District December 13-15, 2021. In addition, keep in mind the Florida Legion College is taking place December 16-19, 2021. It is also

National Wreaths across America, so please support our veterans at this time of the year. I hope all have a safe Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Western Area

John Eden, Western Area Commander
westernarea@legionmail.org



The Western Area has been very busy these past two months. Both 1st and 2nd Districts had their District Meetings, and all went well. The 1st District is running their District Meetings with a different FUN theme each meeting (Halloween theme in the October meeting) and doing a great job of it. We also had a very informative Western Area Training session in late September. All four of the Department senior staff were there and

provided excellent "big-picture" training about the Legion and our major programs. Both Districts had Posts represented and we would like to say **THANKS** to our Department Staff for a job well done.

We also had our Department Fall Conference in Orlando the first week in November, providing more detailed training. The Department honored our Western Area for obtaining the highest membership numbers by October 31, 2021 (both total memberships and the highest number of renewals). WHY? Because we have two great District Commanders (Sonny Decker, 1st District & Steve Mears, 2nd District). A big **THANKS** to Steve and Sonny for a job well done.

Thanksgiving will be over by the time you read this. Most of our Posts are having big dinners for our Veterans and for our young troopers away from home on Thanksgiving Day. Again, a big **THANKS** to our individual Post Commanders for all you do for the veterans and your communities.

I hope all had a great Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and your upcoming Christmas and New Year's holidays go well. Everyone, stay safe and virus-free as we continue to strive for our American Legion membership and program goals. See you all soon.

Happy Holidays

Bruce Thurber, Eastern Membership
membership@legionmail.org



Fall Conference and Thanksgiving are now behind us. Christmas and New Year are just around the corner. Our goal is 75% by December 9, 2021 and Department and National will

have limited office hours. The computers however will be running so please process membership frequently. As I mentioned at our conference, we had a rough start and processing is slow. The sooner we are able to get them submitted the better chance of hitting the 100% mark before New Year's Day. I really like the *Weekly Increase Leaderboard* our Adjutant has put together it shows how hard everyone is working at a glance.

As many of our members and non-member veterans have limited funds this holiday

season consider a gift of membership in your Post. See your Post Adjutant, pay their dues, and pick up their card.

As American Legion members, our most sacred responsibility is to look out for each other and our fellow veterans. As a way to reach out to members and former members who may need help, over the Holidays many times our members are alone Buddy Checks can help prevent them from feeling alone.

1. **Gather up a team** to call or personally visit members and former members of The American Legion
2. If you don't have a list of members and former members at your fingertips, **visit MyLegion.org and download the names of current members and those who have let their memberships expire.**
3. **Divide up the call list among your team members.** Some may have personal connections with the member or the former member and should make that particular buddy check.

4. **Start making connections** – either from a quiet place inside the post or from your home – to see how the members and former members are doing, ask if they need anything, and invite them to any event or activity planned to help celebrate the Holidays.
5. Make sure you **thank the member or former member** at the beginning and at the end of your call.
6. If the member or former member wishes to renew, be sure to **have your post's payment procedure at your fingertips**, the address to send a check, or offer to stop by in person to pick it up (another opportunity to connect).
7. **Leave contact information** in case the member or former member can't take the call or needs anything in the future.





Avoiding Renewals

Randy Holeyfield, Western Membership
membershipfal@legionmail.org



Many of you follow the weekly reports, some do not. But it is the best way to see where your post, District, or Area's standing is. On the last report of November 12, 2021, District 7 is still ahead of the pack. Great

job, keep it up.

But the fact is every post can, could, and possibly should be at 100%. You say, "well there are specific difficulties that we are having" and that is quite possible and maybe true. But there is a simple resolve to membership, say on? Membership is not per se, the responsibility of the Post Adjutant, neither the Post's 1st Vice Commander, nor the Post Membership Chair. Please say on, Membership is the responsibility of each and every member of The American Legion. Yes, every member. If every member would just pay their dues, just your dues, it could and would save millions of dollars wasted on

sending numerous renewal notices. This is a fact, not just an idea to promote renewals. In the last National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis the figures were 3.7 million dollars to send out the previous year's renewal notices, yes, \$3.7 million.

Just knowing this alone should encourage you to get your dues paid, where millions of dollars are wasted because members are delaying their renewals. The most common phrase I get is: "my membership card is good until the end of December." And they are correct, but it does not change the fact that it's been dues since the beginning of The American Legion's fiscal year started. So even when you renew in December, it's still due again in July. You do not get your money's worth by waiting, and though not delinquent till December 31st, you just get a 5-month grace period. But in the process of the delayed renewal, you contributed to wasting millions of dollars that could and should be used elsewhere. I may be repeating myself over and over, but I for one cannot understand the delay and the wasting of our funds. All of us can

do so much by just paying our dues. Just one person, you. Another option is having your renewals sent via e-mail instead of an (expensive) snail-mail letter. Or even better, choose autopay, though it will be done in the month of July (when our Fiscal year starts).

But there's more, you say more? Yes, another option is PUFL. What's that? PUFL is Paid Up For Life, where you can choose to pay all of your dues upfront, based on your age (price is different for everyone). And it could be around \$1,000, Wow. I am a PUFL, and I looked at it from this perspective: I never have to pay dues ever again, so based on my age and the current dues at my post I would be even at age 87. But if I die before that I looked at it like this? Through my estate, The American Legion keeps the balance as a gift to the Legion. It's a win, win situation, I win by paying my dues at the first of the year, and when I die the balance goes to the Legion to continue to support our Veterans, Children & Youth, and our communities.

Everyone wins, and I help renewals at the start of the year, July 1st.

December Membership Report for Western Zone

Randy Holeyfield, Western Membership
membershipfal@legionmail.org



Greeting everyone, our Department Commander is working diligently and is out to visit posts soon. As our numbers are out and Department is working to ensure their accuracy. These reports help gauge our progress, and if they do not match what your post has you can contact Department, or myself. I am here for any membership-related issues, training, Buddy calls, you name it. I'm here for you, the individual post, not just a District, Area, or Zone, every individual post.

I will come to do training, make phone calls, send out emails for transfer from Post 400

(the DMS), whatever it takes or is needed. But I need an invitation from you, at a time and place convenient for you. Everything is in your favor, and for your benefit, so let's get started. Whether it's help with MyLegion, or just something to do with paperwork or forms, I'm here for you. It can be in person, over the phone, or computer.

As an extension of your post membership team, I'm here. Just think of a Membership Chair as one more on the post's team. Whether it is a District, Area, or Department Membership Chair, we all are a collective team working for one goal: Your post's progress and helping wherever we can. My information is readily available and disseminated. Feel free to contact me, emails are the best way, because we can collaborate best with a direct communication line, along with attachments and/or helpful

links. I know that my counterpart on the East side of Florida is the same, we are a team dedicated to your success. So let your District or Area Membership Chair help you, but don't forget I am here as well.

As far as numbers: The Department is at 62:11% and Districts are hovering in the '60s, some even already at 100% or greater. The Quick Draw qualifications passed (October 31st), and at the Fall Conference, we recognized 31 posts that achieved it. But we stand corrected, because there was a post that came in at the wire, therefore, congratulations to Post 102 for their dedicated efforts that paid off.

And with these 32 posts achieving the early membership benchmark, they are poised to get the "Gold Battle E" (Battle Effectiveness

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award, which is reaching 100% before December 31st). But do not fret, your post can still attain the Battle E award because

if your post reaches 100% by December 31st your Membership Team qualifies for the Silver Battle E (it looks the same, but it's silver). Keep up the hard work, as many posts

are not even at the number that they were last year during this time. If you need help, just give me a call or email.

Update on Motions Addressed During Fall Conference

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders
legionriders@legionmail.org



Wow, Christmas already? Beverly and I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy Prosperous New Year. The last few years have been tough, but we made it through.

No need in dwelling; we've made it to what looks like a fascinating year for The American Legion Riders, Department of Florida.

We're pleased to announce Joe Marcheggiana has joined us as Chair and Jeff Hawk as an event coordinator for the upcoming Unity Ride. Joe has planned out two routes, Atlantic and Gulf, and will not start pre-checks with the posts involved. Jeff has completed two of his tasks by finding a new location for the Summit and the In-State Rally. The Summit will be held at the Holiday Inn and Resort in Orlando. The Rally will be held at Orange County Chopper in Clearwater. Thank you to both!

Beverly and I are trying to build a future team to keep the ALR growing by forming

committees and delegating responsibilities. As we continue to grow, we need help on the administrative side of the operation. Working with Classy during the Round Robin, helping with the website, etc. If you are interested, please let us know.

Here is an update on motions addressed during Fall Conference:

- Snowbird membership, tabled in the past, failed by majority vote.
- ALR Department fundraisers dollars to stay in Florida. (Does not restrict local chapter fundraisers, for example, Legacy Scholarship Fund.) All ALR Department fundraisers will continue to focus on PVR/SPI. Funds raised in April (RR) will be split 50/50 between PVR/SPI. Funds raised through the other eleven months will be restricted to SPI.
- MGR proceeds, we have a committee looking at other areas that need funding in the "Children and Youth" Program.
- Purchase of two sets of communication devices has been approved to improve safety during the Unity Ride. The amount is not to exceed \$1,500.
- Purchase a laptop, external hard drive, software, and printer has been approved as part of our succession planning. The

amount is not to exceed \$1,500.

Two items to be discussed during the Summit are the Future Ridership Program and the Rider's Digital Manual.

If you have any ideas, please share! Again, Thank You for all your Efforts!

Here is our tentative schedule for the upcoming year.

- **Meet & Greet**, February 2, 2022
- **Summit**, February 3 - 6, 2022
- **Classes**, February 3, 2022
- **Safety Class**, February 6, 2022
- **Round Robin**, April 1 - 30, 2022
- **Children & Youth Picnic**, April 9, 2022 Post 1
- **Meet & Greet**, April 24, 2022 Post 57, Lake City
- **In-State Unity Ride**, April 25 - 29, 2022
- **Rally**, April 30, 2022

Beverly and I would like to thank each of you for the support we received this last year! Thank You for what you do, and we are proud to be part of your Leadership Team of such an excellent group!

"For the Clause. Not the Applause"

Florida American Legion College

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College
deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org



December is here, "**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2022!**"!

If you wanted to attend the next Florida American Legion College session, but have not submitted your 2021 application,

you must now wait until the next session in 2022.

What can I do before the next session opens? Good Question, do the following:

1. Basic Training online by going to Legion.org.
2. Obtain a copy of the Officers Guide 2021 and read it in its entirety.
3. Attend District training.
4. Attend any Department training.

5. Ask your District Commander about training opportunities.

Ask your District Commander, District Vice Commander, Area Commander, Zone Commander and/or PDC for information about upcoming training sessions. One of them might be able to provide you with valuable information. Regardless, always check out the Officers Guide for information and read up on the following manuals:

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- 1. Adjutant manual
- 2. Membership manual
- 3. Training videos at (Floridalegion.org) and (legion.org)
- 4. Forms and Documents at (Floridalegion.org) under resources

Don't forget you can also receive valuable training while attending Department Convention and Fall Conference.

Please note, you need to complete Basic Training online before applying to attend Florida American Legion College.

The more you learn the more you can help your Post, District and Department to move forward, with the correct way of doing things. If you still have questions email or call me at 352-226-4370, I will answer your questions.

Veterans Day Flag Retirement Ceremony and JSSP First Round Follow-up

Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP
jrotc@legionmail.org



There were several Veterans' Day Programs that I had the opportunity to attend this past Veterans' Day Week. One notable reference was the Broward County JROTC Flag Retirement

Ceremony held at Boyd Anderson. This was held on the eve of Veterans Day and conducted solely by the Cadets who represented each of the branches of the program. It was held at dusk and was under the direction of the Cadets and the Boyd Anderson Military Academy Senior Instructor. There was the Posting of the Colors, followed by the Presentation of the Ceremonial Flag by the JROTC Cadets. Also included, was a very moving Tribute to GEN Colin L. Powell who passed last month. The Conclusion of the program was the

Retirement of Colors by the combined JROTC Color Guard.

For the JSSP Postal First Round Match, it is not moving in a positive direction. Only one Marksmanship Team has successfully submitted the paperwork that must be completed prior to the targets being sent out. Since this is a time-consuming effort to get the team registered with the Coach requirements for the Risk Management Course, background clearance, and Post Affiliation Form completed by the Post Commander, the teams will not make the December 15th deadline. I know there must be teams throughout the State of Florida that have youth that are competing in marksmanship. This is a valuable sport

that teaches safety, discipline, focus, and teamwork which results in scholarship awards for the youth. I would ask that you please contact me if anyone is having a problem with registration or understanding the process.

Thanks to all our posts and veterans who are supporting our youth programs and may everyone stay safe during the upcoming holiday season.



Sign-Up to Receive Updates

Stuart Scott, Legislative
legislative@legionmail.org



Happy Holidays from your Legislative Chairman, to all of you celebrating the holiday that means the most to you! Let's celebrate all that makes our beautiful country what it is today!

The committee weeks that have taken

place so far haven't produced much for our concerns, yet there have been several bills filed that have a veteran flavor. We will continue to monitor them as they move through either chamber as well as the different committees.

If you wish to sign-up for updates, please do so on our website at floridalegion.org/resources/join-mailing-list/ and choose Legislative. The goal is to send out weekly updates during the session, which begins on January 11, 2022.

The March on Tallahassee will be on January 19, 2022. We will gather at Post 13 in Tallahassee in the morning for a "Know before you go" briefing. Then we will make our way to the capitol for a day of meet and greets that will be arranged. If you desire to attend this year's March on Tallahassee, please contact me directly for a headcount.

As always, please be safe out there and remember, everyone is busy, just as you are, so be patient, considerate, and focus on the outcome!



GET YOUR FALL RAFFLE TICKETS ONLINE! DRAWING ON NOVEMBER 6, 2021.

floridalegion.org/enter



PROJECT: VETRELIEF



Bulletin

DECEMBER 2021



// 1,000+ VETERANS SERVED! //

During the month of October, PROJECT: VetRelief hit our first major milestone, *helping 1,000 veterans with financial assistance!* In fact, by the end of the month, we had reached 1,006 veterans served through our program. We are extremely proud of this accomplishment, as it has taken us over 8 years to get to this level of support.

We are expecting on reaching our second milestone early next year, which is providing \$1,000,000 in financial aid. Through October, we have given nearly \$915,000!

Each year, our program has been able to help more and more service members and their families. However, we are only able to continue this much needed support through the donations we receive from the Legion Family, corporations, and individuals.

THANK YOU to our sponsors, volunteer advocates and all those that have supported The American Legion, Department of Florida's newest program. They have believed in our mission since the beginning and continue to dedicate their time, energy and efforts to ensure we are successful and supporting the veteran community.

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PROJECT: VetRelief recently helped a disabled female veteran, who is a single mother of two children, by providing financial assistance for her rent. With this support, we were able to keep her and her children from being evicted. Today, they are safe, warm and on their way to being self-sufficient.

Every day, the support from the Legion Family makes stories like this disabled female veterans possible.

However, we'd like to increase the number of families we serve in 2022. We are asking that you help ensure that we can continue our mission by making a year-end contribution. As you make your final 2021 tax-deductible donations, please consider the immediate, and in some cases life altering, impact you can make on Florida's veterans, active duty military members, and their families.

Donations can be made online (www.projectvetrelief.org/donate), mailed into the Department Headquarters, or given through the Commander's Charity. We simply cannot increase our level of support without you!

Best wishes for a bright and beautiful holiday season, from our family here at PROJECT: VetRelief.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Each quarter our Board of Directors agrees on providing grants to our vetted strategic partners to sponsor veterans through their existing programs or expand their services. Our goal is to provide a total of \$22,000 every quarter to these partners. Thankfully, we have been able to meet this goal, because of the charitable efforts of the Legion Riders, and the several Challenge 22 Events hosted by the Legion Family, like the one recently held by Post 63 in Winter Garden.

Dr. Janell Royster, our newest member to our SPI Committee, has been developing a metric system to quantify our impact on the veteran community and how we are helping to end veteran suicides. She is also working on expanding our footprint by identifying new organizations for potential strategic partners and building our network to cover the entire state of Florida.

Be on the lookout for fundraising events such as Post 69's Challenge 22 event in January and the Legion Rider's month-long Unity Ride campaign in the Spring.

SUPPORT CASES

JULY 2021 - JUNE 2022

*Reflect PVR Cases ONLY



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Cops Night Before Christmas

Daryl Bass, Law & Order

laworder@legionmail.org



Where has the time gone? It's already close to Christmas. A time when many of our Troops will be standing watch over this great Nation away from their families and loved ones. Also, our Nation's first

responders will be on duty to protect, serve, assist, and render life-saving aid, away from their families.

It won't be long till we once again meet for The Department of Florida Convention in only six months. We must all remember that as part of our Law & Order Program it is a very rewarding time when we recognize our chosen first responders for their outstanding work for the past year. So please Law & Order Chairs be sure to fill out the required paperwork and get it to Bekki Tibbs (Programs Director) so that they can be honored.

I thought I would include this version of a "Night Before Christmas" from a different perspective:

Cops Night Before Christmas

Tw'as the night before Christmas, yet he slept alone.

In a one-bedroom house, made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney with presents to give,

and to see just what man in this small house did live.

I looked all about, what a strange sight to see.

No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stocking by the fire, just boots spit-shined bright.

Then something else gleamed, reflecting

the moonlight.

There were medals and badges, Awards of all kinds.

And a sobering thought soon came to mind.

For this house was different, unlike any I'd topped.

This was the home of a first responder, The home of a Cop.

I'd heard stories about "them" and I had to see more.

So, I walked down the hall and pushed open the door.

And there he lay sleeping, silent and alone.

Curled up in his bed, in his one-bedroom home.

He seemed so gentle, his face weathered tan,

I soon understood that this was more than a man.

For I realized the families that I saw this night,

Owed their lives to the ones willing to fight.

Soon around this nation, the children would play,

And grown-ups would celebrate on a bright Christmas day.

They all enjoyed safety each month and all year,

because of Cops like him, this man lying here.

I couldn't help but wonder how many were on patrol.

All alone on Christmas Eve out in the shivering cold.

I watched him for hours so silent and so still, and I noticed that he shivered, from the cold night's chill.

So, I took off my jacket, the one made of red.

And I covered this officer from his toes to his head.

Then I put on his jacket with the badge of silver and gold,

With the words "Police Officer" emblazoned so bold.

Though it barely fit me I swelled with pride,

and for one shining moment I was an officer inside.

I didn't want to leave him so quiet in the night,

this guardian of Law & Order, so willing to fight.

But half asleep he rolled over and in a voice clean and pure,

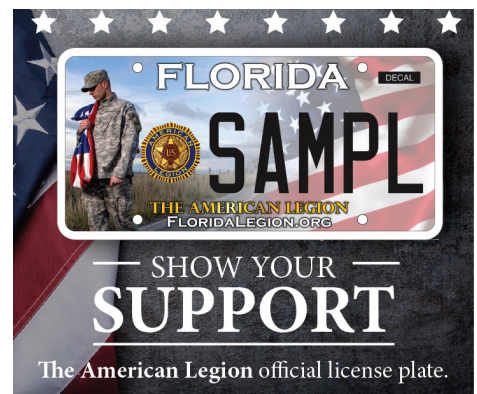
said, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas, all here is secure".

One look at my watch and I knew he was right.

Merry Christmas my friends, Code four, and good night.

Author Unknown

Merry Christmas to all my Legion family and to all our Veterans and serving Military personnel and first responders standing watch for us all.





Recognizing Our Youth

Troy Horsley, School Medals
schoolmedals@legionmail.org



Comrades of the state of Florida, my name is Troy Horsley and I am currently serving as Department of Florida Chairman for School Medals. Hopefully, by now all of the district and post chairman have been identified. I am looking forward to hearing from the district chairs on the great works of each post in promoting the

future leaders of our country. It is up to us as legionnaires to go out and recognize our youth who are about supporting our core values.

How we approach that is quite simple. Go out to our schools and talk to the principals or guidance counselors and tell them about the School Medal program. Let them know we want to recognize a male and female student who best demonstrates all the desired qualities of Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship, and Service from their school. School Medals and

certificates are provided free to participating schools. All the school's responsibility is to select the students to be awarded the School Medal. School medals are normally presented by a Legionnaire at the school's end-of-year awards program in recognition of their great achievements.

If you need assistance or have never done this at your post, don't hesitate to contact me and I will gladly help. There are resources available on the Department website, floridalegion.org or I can send you a starter package. Hope to hear from you soon.

American Legion Scouters

Chris Ragusa, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



Fall Conference: The Scouting presentation at the recent Fall Conference on Friday, November 5, 2021, was well attended, with seven participants involved in discussions regarding the history of Scouting and the American Legion, 2021 highlights, the difference between sponsoring and chartering Boy Scouts of America (BSA) units, how to charter a BSA unit, current topics of interest, and the 2021-22 challenge. The participants included representatives from Posts 1, 112, 139, 240, 267, and 271. Two of those participants are Post Commanders that recently chartered Scouts BSA troops that found themselves in need of a new Chartering Organization. Bravo Zulu!

Pack 3891 are chartered to Post 389 (Ruskin), and Pack 1381 is chartered to Post 138 (Port Tampa City).



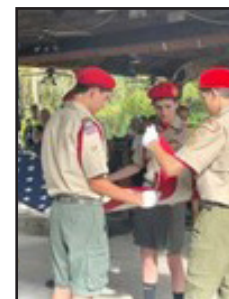
passed by the 19th National Convention of The American Legion in New York, Sept. 20-23, 1937. Post 139 conducted their initial Flag Interment Ceremony on November 10, 1957. Pictured include (left to right) Post 139 Chaplain Ed Lessard, event organizer Dee Cisneros, Scouts BSA Life Scout Halsey Keats, Post 139 Commander Mark Wilson, and Post 139 Vice Commander (and Post Scouting Chair) Glenn Pendergrass. Legionnaire attendees included Department of Florida 1st Vice Commander Eunice Butts, Central Area Commander Bruce Carl, 15th District Commander Stephen Tyler, and Department Scouting Chair Chris Ragusa.



Ruskin FL VFW Veterans Day Parade:

The Ruskin VFW Veterans Day Parade, which took place on Saturday, November 13, 2021, featured three American Legion Post-chartered Boy Scouts of America units. Marching together and led by American Legion Post 389 Scouting Chair (and 15th District Scouting Chair) Bob Lindsey, were Scouts BSA Troop 3892, Cub Scout Pack 3891, and Cub Scout Pack 1381. Troop 3892 and

Joint Flag Retirement Ceremony: On Saturday, November 13, 2021, a Joint Flag Retirement Ceremony, hosted by Riverview Moose Lodge 2158 in Gibsonton, FL, and planned by American Legion Post 139 (Tampa), was conducted by Scouts BSA Troop 53 (chartered to Post 139). Post 139 and Troop 53 used a script based on the Ceremony for Disposal of Unserviceable Flags as outlined in Resolution No. 440,





Many Thanks

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements

veteransbenefits@legionmail.org



November was a very busy month starting with Fall Conference, Veterans Day Activities, and Post 63's Challenge 22 event.

I would like to start by saying "thank you", to Wanda Brandt the Auxiliary President, and to Dee Bell the Auxiliary VA&R Chair for allowing me to give a VA&R Benefits Class to the Auxiliary. Dee Bell also assisted me with the Legion VA&R Benefits Class at Fall Conference. This shows that we can work as a family in spreading the word about Veterans Benefits to the whole Legion Family.

I would also like to thank Debbie Wheeler, The American Legion Department of Florida Women's Chair for assisting in both classes. Most women veterans don't even think they are eligible. I also want to thank Tony Williams, from Veterans Counseling Veterans, and Sharon Lowe, from K9 Line, for speaking on what services they provide to our veterans and their families.

I would also like to say "Good Job" to Kurt Gies and American Legion Post 63 on the outstanding job they did in their Challenge 22 event. If you don't know we have an epidemic of 22 veterans a day and 16 kids a day committing suicide.

Challenge 22 Events are to spread awareness of this epidemic and to educate people on the signs, symptoms, and where to get help.

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

STAND BY THEM

Confidential help for Veterans and their families

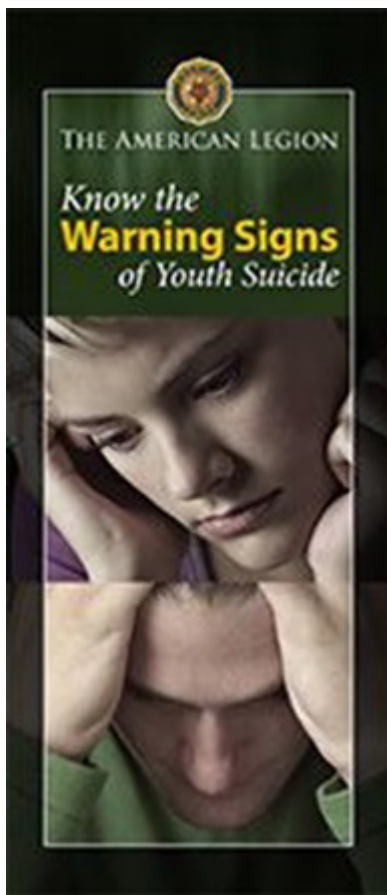
Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF SUICIDE RISK

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.
- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

The presence of these signs requires immediate attention. Call us if you experience any of these warning signs.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Know the Warning Signs of Youth Suicide:

- Abrupt changes in eating habits
- Aggressive behavior
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Decline in schoolwork
- Depression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Giving away possessions
- Legal questions about death
- Loss of interest in regular activities
- Loss of energy
- Mood swings and personality changes
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Preoccupation with death
- Previous suicide attempts
- Psychosomatic complaints
- Suddenly happy after long depression
- Talking about life after death
- Unnecessary and dangerous risk-taking
- Withdrawal from friends or family

National Suicide Prevention Life Line

1-800-273-TALK (273-8255)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Hopeline Network

1-800-442-HOPE(442-4673)
www.hope.com/centers

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

www.save.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org

Find us on: **facebook**

facebook.com/floridalegion





Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Alan Cohen, VA&R

var@legionmail.org



Much to talk about this month. I'll begin with last month's busy Fall Conference. As always many classes were conducted and all were well attended. I held a combined meeting of the Department's VAVS

reps and VA&R Committee. In attendance were members having combined Legion experience of well over 100 years and we were of the consensus that we can find ways to work around COVID restrictions and step up our game, so to speak, in doing all we can to help our fellow veterans. I look forward to the coming months and being able to expand the Legion's footprint.

We also conducted yet another successful Post Service Officer class with instruction done by our partner, the Florida Department of Veteran's Affairs and graduated 51 PSO's. Congratulations to all and thank you for your dedication.

Just a couple of pieces of information related

to benefits. It has been noted by the National Institutes of Health that female military personnel and veterans are 40% more at risk of developing breast cancer and especially those who during their service were exposed to burn pits. Especially those under the age of 40. Two Senators have begun putting pressure on the Department of Veterans Affairs to do in-depth research into that link.

I anticipate there'll be more information forthcoming. An issue I've spoken to previously continues, that being companies or individuals who charge veterans or their families for claims assistance. According to information gathered from these groups their charges would be illegal were they actually accredited representatives. Steer clear of them!

I'd now like to address an issue that's been a couple of years in the making. There's been increased conversation with regard to what's apparently some confusion linking "PTS" with "PTSD" and a so-called "cure". A couple of things: first, the American Psychiatric Association (who publishes the DSM-5 manual of mental disorders), the VA agree on two things. That PTS is a normal reaction to a traumatic event and not a mental disorder

and is more likely than not to improve or substantially subside within 1- 3 months, therefore no treatment is recommended, therefore PTS isn't even mentioned in DSM-5. Should that condition worsen it can develop into PTSD and the individual should by all means be treated by a trained clinician.

PTSD is indeed a disorder and mental health experts agree that there is no cure, however with effective therapy patients can learn to manage symptoms and live a more normal life armed with the knowledge that the possibility always exists that symptoms/ triggers may occur. With regard to this, please be aware that if a veteran is rated by the VA for PTSD, that rating can indeed be reduced or taken away should the veteran adamantly claim to be cured or if his/ her claim is shown to be fraudulent. The catchphrase is, "The VA give-ith and the VA can take-ith away". I hope this clarifies or at least answers some of the questions that have arisen from this matter.

As always, I look forward to the new year and continuing to do all we can for our brother and sister veterans and their families.





November 19, 2021 Membership Target Report (65%)		
6	Joe Marcheggiani	68.85%
7	Burl Thomas	68.46%
9	George Bograkos	67.63%
4	John Bennett	66.14%
1	Sonny Decker	65.38%
16	Robert Matheson	65.33%
8	Skip Felicita	64.96%
14	Thomas Frank	64.51%
12	Dennis Mallon	63.90%
2	Steve Mears	63.81%
17	Jim Bowers	63.72%
13	Harold Boyer	62.75%
3	Stuart Scott	61.93%
5	Lena Heredia-Perez	61.11%
15	Stephen Tyler	57.99%
11	Harry Malecki	57.54%
Eastern	Daryl Bass	66.58%
Western	John Edens	65.13%
Southwestern	Jessica Moore	63.75%
Central	Bruce Carl	63.63%
Northern	Troy Horsley	62.91%
Southern	Johnny Castro	62.36%
Post 400		60.75%
Post 208		60.98%



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From health to auto, we offer valuable insurance products designed to fit the specific needs of Legionnaires.



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The Legionnaire Insurance Trust products and services are there when you them most. Listen to how others have benefited from services like our Cancer Care Insurance Plan.

- Cash benefits sent to Legionnaire members diagnosed with cancer
- We send you money – even if you don't have cancer

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Next Membership Goal:
December 1, 2021

75%





DEPARTMENT
OF FLORIDA

**DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
SOUTHERN AREA BALL!!**
DATE: SATURDAY JANUARY 29, 2022

Where: American Legion Post 142

Please join us in celebrating the American
Legion Department of Florida's Southern Area.



4 Chaplains, Sunday, January 30th 1pm

AMERICAN LEGION POST 222

4250 NE 5th Ave Oakland Park, FL

Featuring Sounds by
(Don't Stop the Music)

Program ad forms: \$120
for inside front & back
cover and back cover. Full
pg. \$100 half pg. \$50.
Contact: Rob McCarten at
njirish11@gmail.com

Cocktail hour 5pm
with Hors d'oeuvres

Dinner served at
6pm

Chicken Marsala or
Salmon entrée options

Admission Ticket \$30
Zelle payment option @
Guamwarrior60@outlook.com

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American Legion Post 142

171 SW 2nd St
Pompano Beach, FL 33060
954-942-2448

Contact : Rob McCarten
njirish116466ail.com
njirish11@gmail.com

CHILDREN & YOUTH GOLF TOURNAMENT



PICNIC

Sat. April 9, 2022

Golf - Shotgun Start at 8:00am, Indian River Preserve Golf Club

3950 Clubhouse Drive, Mims, Fl

Picnic at Noon, Post 1

1281 N Washington Ave. Titusville, Fl

- FOOD
- FUN
- ENTERTAINMENT
- FUN
- AUCTION
- FUN
- LEGION RIDERS RIDE-IN
- FUN
- GOLF AWARDS
- FUN



Silent Auction



Golfers, dinner is available on Friday the 8th, at Post 1. Call ahead at least one week to let them know you are going to dinner, so they can have enough food for the night. (321) 269-9959

Hotel reservations for the 8th and/or 9th, Best Western Space Shuttle Inn, \$59 per night - (321) 269-9100

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
CHILDREN & YOUTH GOLF TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2022
Team Registration Form

GOLFERS

1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ 4) _____

SPONSORSHIPS & FEES

GOLD SPONSOR (4 GOLFERS & HOLE SPONSOR SIGN) \$325 _____
SILVER SPONSOR (HOLE SPONSORSHIP ONLY) \$100 _____
GOLFERS ONLY (\$70 PER GOLFER) \$280 _____
SPONSORSHIP CUT-OFF DATE: MARCH 25, 2022
TOTAL SUBMITTED _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT PERSON FOR THE TEAM _____
PHONE NUMBER _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: S.A.L. Squadron 325. Put "C&Y Golf" in memo
and mail to Squadron 325, 3412 HWY 301N - Unit 103, Ellenton, FL 34222

ANY QUESTIONS - CALL LES MARTIN (941) 201-7293